COUNTING STATION OPERATIONS

Counting Process for CCS (Central Counting Station) and Accumulating Process for CAS (Central Accumulation Station)

- A central count optical scan voting system uses a counting process.
- An electronic voting system that does not entail the counting of ballots at a central location uses an accumulating process.
- If a political subdivision (including counties) uses both optical scan ballots counted at CCS and electronic precinct counters or DREs, it will need to follow both a counting process and an accumulating process, as appropriate to the voting system.

What is the Counting Process?

- All Central Count Optical Scan Systems must use pre-locked, pre-sealed ballot boxes (§§ 127.061-.066)
  - Complete sort and hand audit at CCS
  - Provisional ballots accumulated and secured and the Summary of Provisional ballots prepared for delivery to voter registrar
  - Run ballots through tabulator
  - Compare total ballots tabulated with number of voters casting ballots by precinct (election day and early voting) from combination form (§§ 127.069, 127.125-.1311)

What is the Accumulating Process?

- CAS is subject to the same general rules as CCS, but votes are actually counted at the precinct and then accumulated electronically.
- After polls close on election day, precinct election officials verify and document the public count on all applicable devices (DREs, precinct scanners, and affiliated equipment)
- Precinct election officials verify that public count matches the number of voters who voted from the combination form or poll list.
- Precinct election officials print out a minimum of two copies of the results tape from each applicable device, with two election officials and no more than two watchers, if watchers are present, signing each tape.
- Precinct election officials secure the voting devices against unauthorized use.
- If DREs are used at the precinct polling place, precinct election officials must secure the media in the same manner that an election judge would secure the voted ballots.
- Special bags that have a lock and seal have been approved by SOS for purposes of transporting the electronic media from the DREs or precinct scanners to CAS.
- Alternatively, electronic media may remain secured in the applicable device.
- The presiding election judge or his/her designated election clerk transports the secured electronic media (as well as all the election records, unused election supplies, and election equipment if directed by the county elections officer) to CAS.
- Electronic media is handled and processed in the same manner that CCS would handle receipt and processing of voted ballots in ballot boxes.
- In the case of precinct scanners, if a discrepancy of more than 3 exists between the number of ballots recorded on the ballot and seal certificate and the number of ballots cast on the tape, the official tabulation of those ballots shall be conducted at CCS. (§ 127.156)

TESTING TABULATORS AND ACCUMULATORS

CCS Automatic Tabulating Equipment

- Automatic tabulating equipment used for counting ballots at CCS must be tested three times:
  - First test is open to public and notice of test must be given in newspaper 48 hours before date of test. Test must be conducted at least 48 hours before tabulating equipment is used.
  - Second test must be conducted immediately before counting of ballots with tabulating equipment begins.

- Third test must be conducted immediately after counting of ballots with equipment is completed. (§ 127.093)

Precinct Automatic Tabulating Equipment

- Each unit of automatic tabulating equipment that does not entail the counting of ballots at CCS, such as precinct scanners, must be tested, using all applicable ballot formats, in accordance with the testing procedures described above for automatic tabulators at CCS. The general custodian of election records conducts the first test. (§ 127.152)

DRE Voting Systems (§ 129.022-.023)

- Not later than 48 hours before voting begins on a DRE voting system, the general custodian of election records must conduct a logic and accuracy test.
- The test must be open to the public and notice of the test must be published at least 48 hours before test begins.
- As part of the logic and accuracy test, the central accumulator system will be tested to determine whether the system accurately tabulates results from the electronic files used to count ballots voted in the election. The electronic files created from the logic and accuracy testing for the election must be used in the process of this test.
- A hardware diagnostic, or functionality, test is also required to verify that the mechanical components are working correctly. This should include the testing system screen displays, verifying and adjusting the correct date and time, if necessary, and verifying and adjusting calibration, if applicable.

CHECKS AND BALANCES - CCS

- All ballot boxes are delivered and comparison of serial numbers of seal and log is made to be sure the correct seal has been placed on the box, according to the log of distributed seals. Wire hasp seals are properly kept.
- Compare the number of voters who signed the combination form to the overall vote count from the election returns. House Bill 2817, 82nd Legislature. Making this comparison allows one to determine if there are any missing votes or duplicated votes
- ALL election records are received at CCS.
- Ballot and seal certificate is located in each ballot box.
- Ballots are sorted and resolved or duplicated before delivery to Tabulation Supervisor. (typically done by CCS clerks)
- Provisional ballots are delivered to the general custodian of records with the list of provisional voters. (Note: a summary of provisional ballots is prepared by the custodian of records before the provisional ballot affidavits are given to the county voter registrar.)
- All voted ballots are carefully tracked as they move through CCS. Some counties create "tracking sheets" that follow each precinct's ballots, and a clerk signs off on the sheet at each stage in the counting process (sorting, duplication when necessary, beginning counting, and finishing counting, to storage area).
- This ensures that all ballots are counted and that none are counted twice.
- Duplicated ballots are properly noted and the serial number of the original ballot is written on the duplicate ballot and vice versa.
- Original ballots that are duplicated are placed in an envelope designated for such purpose and are locked in the appropriate ballot box with other ballots from the same precinct. (very important for recounts)
- All ballots are counted and verified against the ballot and seal certificate.
- Status report is printed and it is verified that all precincts had been counted.
- Precinct report is printed showing the number of ballots counted for each precinct.
- Cumulative report is printed indicating all votes from all precincts are included.
- The continuous feed real time audit log is examined for counting interruptions, unauthorized equipment tampering, or any other activity that might make the vote totals questionable.

- All reports are printed in the number of copies statutorily-required.
- Keys to ballot box locks are properly distributed.
- All ballot boxes containing voted ballots are properly locked, with an indication on the outside of each box showing which precinct's ballots are contained in that box.
- For ballot boxes that have a flap to cover the slot for the deposit of ballots, a log recording the serial number of the wire hasp seal used to seal slot is kept and signed by two election officials.
- Precinct returns are backed up to disk or tape, as applicable to system.
- The third test is successful and results are verified with test results. (If no successful test after retry, ballots must be counted manually or secure another tabulator from vendor or neighboring county.)
- For precinct ballot counters, including DREs, precinct returns printed from the device at CAS are compared to the precinct returns printed at the precinct level, to ensure that precinct totals match. (If discrepancy, precinct totals control)
- For precinct ballot counters using modem transfer, a comparison of returns transferred via modem to CAS is made with precinct returns printed at the precinct level. (If discrepancy, precinct totals control)
- Proper logic and accuracy testing of the accumulation software is required before the election night results may be accumulated. The test must be designed to determine whether the CAS accurately tabulates results from the electronic files used to count ballots voted in the election. Electronic files created from the first logic and accuracy test for the election must be used in the process of this test.
- After uploading the precinct results to the CAS, the election official must verify and document that the central accumulator's record of number of votes cast matches the number of signatures on the combination form or ballot and seal certificate for that precinct. If there is a discrepancy, CCSM determines if a further audit is necessary.
- Prior to local canvass, the election official must verify that the vote total(s) printed at the precinct match the reports generated by the central accumulating system.